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INTRODUCTION



Walking aids assist elderly in their activities of daily living and ensure that they age well in the community. However, it is not uncommon to hear of elderly who refused to use walking aids due to various reasons, and as a result, were seriously injured in events such as falls. Research from Disability and Health Journal¹ (U.S. National Library of Medicine) revealed that the use of mobility aids is often associated with stigmatizing attitudes of dependency. There are also heightened concerns over mobility aid users becoming subjects of negative biases.

¹U.S. National Library of Medicine, Disability and Health Journal. (2010). *Perspectives on Use of Mobility Aids in a Diverse Population of Seniors: Implications for Intervention*. Accessed: July 2019

Who are our Esthers?

Our Esthers are elderly residents at Sunlove Whampoa Dew SAC, who showed unwillingness in using walking aids. This has prompted the project team to work towards increasing the acceptance rate of walking aids by elderly Esthers to reduce falls. The team aims to achieve:

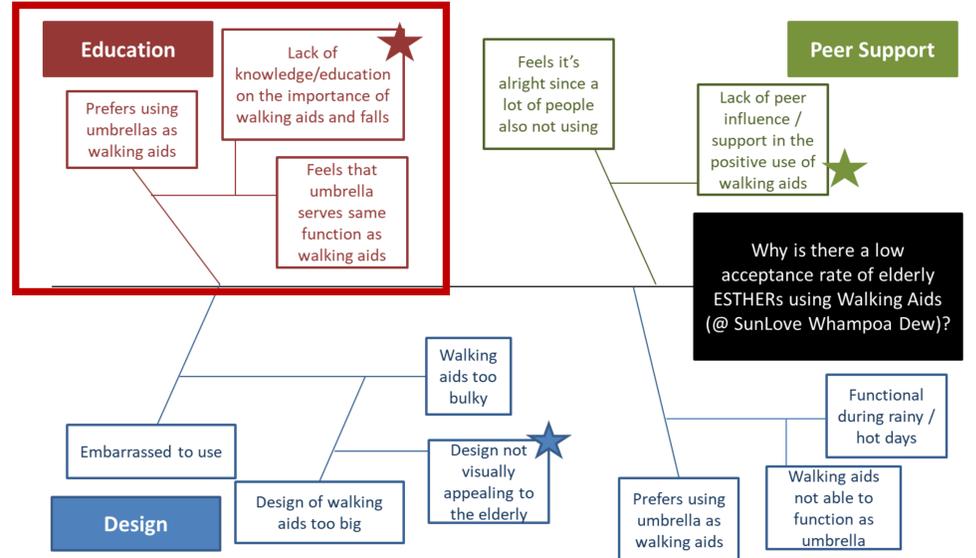
50%

Increase in acceptance rate of walking aid 1 month after implementation

50%

Reduction in fall rates

OUR APPROACH



After identifying several root causes through ESTHER Cafes, the team prioritised the need to address Esthers' lack of knowledge on the importance of using walking aids to prevent falls through education. TTSH physiotherapists were engaged to develop a simple and interactive education session - "Walking Aids and You!" comprising topics suggested by Esthers during ESTHER Cafes. Topics include:

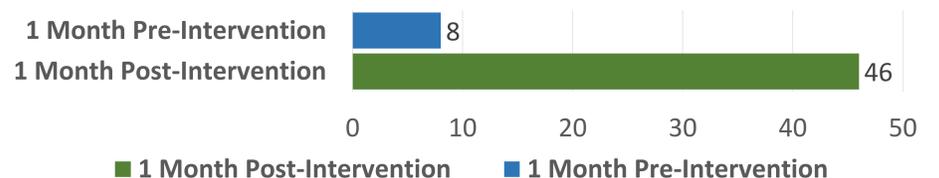
- 1) Why do the Elderly fall?
- 2) Walking Aids and Umbrellas, Who Wins?
- 3) Is Your Walking Aid at the Right Height?
- 4) The Proper Use of Walking Aids



OUTCOMES & LEARNING POINTS

Data collected for a study involving 2 Esthers revealed a 6 times increase in the use of walking aids (in days) after one month of intervention. Furthermore, 1 Esther did not report any falls 1 month post-intervention which was an improvement compared to one month pre-intervention when 1 fall was reported due to inappropriate/lack of use of walking aid. Through "Walking Aids and You!", the team also realized the importance of keeping education sessions for elderly interactive and informal. The move away from lecture-style teaching was beneficial as the Physiotherapist was able to be up-close and personal with Esthers. Aside from that, there was sufficient space for hands-on demonstration and even time for questions.

Days of Use of Walking Aids (2 Esthers combined)



FUTURE PLANS

To further develop "Walking Aids and You!", the team will be working with TTSH's Physiotherapists to develop and incorporate a simple dance routine (involving the use of walking aids) in the center's regular exercise schedule.

The team would also be embarking on phase 2 of the project which allows Esthers to customize the design of their walking aids and tackle the second identified root cause - visually unappealing walking aids. The team has also connected with TTSH Centre for Healthcare Innovation's Living Lab to explore potential areas of collaboration.

METHODOLOGY

Using a person-centered approach, a series of ESTHER Cafes were conducted to better understand why Esthers were not using their prescribed walking aids. ESTHER Cafes also helped the team to better understand what matters to Esthers. Verbatims and data from the ESTHER Cafes were analysed, aiding the team to identify root causes of the problem. Interventions were then co-developed with Esthers and relevant stakeholders to help Esthers understand the importance of using walking aids.



I want to stay healthy, and go out more...Umbrella serves the same purpose laa...

ESTHER Café 1 with Mdm Sim



So bulky lei... if rain how?. Okay ah, umbrella seems quite stable!.. So ugly and paisei!..

ESTHER Café 2 involving more Esthers with similar needs